



# The value of actors to GP trainer and appraiser CPD

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## Context

Actors have been used for many years in the training and formative development of doctors, as well as playing a key role in their summative assessment. They also contribute to CPD, especially in communication skills enhancement. In each of these areas, actors generally play the role of patient, not doctor. In this project, actors took the role of doctor, playing GP registrars in difficulty and challenging GP appraisees in a role play. An experimental workshop (Lyon-Maris and Burrows (2009))<sup>1</sup> set the scene for the present work and reported the approach used for briefing the actors, preparing the facilitators, testing early scenarios and developing a process. This study reports an evaluation of two pilot training days with GP trainers and appraisers.

## Session description

Each training session ran with a small number of participants [6-8] and a facilitator. In the session the group aimed to cover 4 scenarios, having had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with them prior to meeting. The group was arranged in a 'goldfish bowl,' with the actor and one GP participant in the centre to role play the chosen scenario. The running of the scenario was pro-actively managed by the facilitator, who was able to pause action, open up interaction for discussion and swap the GP in the 'hot seat.'

## Evaluation

Observational data was collected at each event by the researchers (KB and SS). Longhand notes were taken, along with oral and written feedback from participants. Follow up feedback was gathered several weeks after the sessions.

The evaluation questions were:

- What are the views of GP appraisers and GP trainers regarding the usefulness of this approach to developing their skills in these roles?
- What additional information is provided to further develop the method and process?

The data were analysed to provide an evaluation of the usefulness of the approach and more detail about the process.

## What was found

Both the appraisers and trainers found the sessions relevant, useful, and valuable, as well as uncomfortable and challenging.

The process allowed participants insight into how they managed communication in difficult and challenging situations, and to experiment with alternative strategies.

The data also gave:

- further insight into the process of sessions;
- emerging simulator 'etiquette';
- better understanding of the role of the facilitator.

## Outcomes

The next step is to further develop the approach:

- create more scenarios;
- roll out more widely for trainer /appraiser CPD;
- consider other areas of use e.g. doctors in difficulty

## Reference

1. Lyon-Maris J and Burrows P (2009) Simulating Doctors: a report on a workshop training actors to simulate General Practitioner Appraisees and General Practitioner Registrars. *Education for Primary Care* **20**: 309-313

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